

Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine

Sheep in New York City's Central Park Die, and Other Unusual Stories From The 1920s, Part I

Editor's Note: It's sometimes hard to believe what you read in the literature. During this holiday season, it is my hope that this potpourri of entries from the New York Times and the 1920s Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association will humor and tantalize the appetite, and perhaps inform.

I acknowledge the contributions to this story of my wife, Doris A. Smith, who three years ago, located the *New York Times'* articles contained herein and prepared a two-page summary of some of the most remarkable (and/or humorous) columns for the students in the History course I was teaching at the time.

Donald F. Smith

By Dr. Donald F. Smith and Doris A. Smith
December 23, 2013

Central Park (New York City) Sheep Poisoned by Garbage Park Lunches Poison Sheep.

30 of Central Park Herd Ill after Eating Refuse Left by Picnickers.

June 4, 1921 – Many of the pedigreed Dorset horned sheep, which graze on the meadow between the east and west drives of Central Park are expected to die as a result of eating refuse left behind by Memorial Day picnickers. Of the herd of ninety, thirty are seriously ill. The sheep were admitted to the lawn at 4:30 Tuesday morning. Wednesday when Frank Hoey, shepherd, let them out of the sheepfold he found many were badly bloated. Dr. Harry F. Nimphius, a consulting veterinary of the Bronx, said at least eight of them could not be saved.

New York Times, June 4, 1921

A 1920s Veterinary Ophthalmologist or a Charlatan His Cross-eyed Dog Cured by Spectacles, Owner Says

The wearing of a pair of spectacles by Lin Foi, a pedigreed chow dog, has practically straightened the animal's cross eyes, according to its owner, C. G. Douglas, druggist, ... [who] explained yesterday a veterinarian had advocated the treatment ... At first the dog did not like the spectacles, said Douglas, but it soon became accustomed to them, and its eyes have slowly but surely been straightened ...

New York Times, Apr 30, 1926

Déjà Vu, Artificially-Colored Dogs

Dyeing Dogs in Paris

Reports from Paris indicate that many women are having their pet dogs dyed a tint to match the gowns they wear. The blonds, henna, rust and brown shades are easily accomplished as coats of both Chows and Pekingese responded well to the usual peroxide and henna treatments, but some difficulty has been experienced in securing matching lavender dachshunds and purple Pomeranians. The fashion has been further complicated by disinclination to use German dyes on French dogs.

JAVMA, Vol 13, p 209, 1922

Rabies in New York City Dogs

Editorial

According to statistics recently made public by the Department of Health of the City of New York, the number of persons bitten by dogs has increased each year during the past five-year period:

Year	Persons Bitten
1921	3,049
1922	3,455
1923	4,538
1924	4,699
1925	7,030

It is understood, of course, that all of these bites are not inflicted by rabid dogs, but the figures may be taken to illustrate graphically a condition which exists, and one that must be taken into consideration in any plan for the control of rabies, namely, the large number of stray or ownerless dogs to be found in almost any populated locality. ...

JAVMA, 1926, p 3

See Part II, December 26, 2013

KEYWORDS:

History of Veterinary Medicine
Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association
Rabies in New York City

TOPIC:

Ephemera

LEADING QUESTION:

How prevalent was canine rabies in New York in the 1920s?

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

Dr. Donald F. Smith, Dean Emeritus of the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, had a passion for the value of the history of veterinary medicine as a gateway for understanding the present and the future of the profession.

Throughout his many professional roles from professor of surgery, to Department Chair of Clinical Sciences, Associate Dean of Education and of Academic Programs and Dean, he spearheaded changes in curriculum, clinical services, diagnostic services and more. He was a diplomat of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons and a member of the National Academy of Practices. Most recently he played a major role in increasing the role of women in veterinary leadership.

Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine is one of his projects where he was able to share his vast knowledge of the profession.

Doris A. Smith is the wife of Dr. Donald F. Smith